

If you have anything, you should offer it.<sup>6</sup> This is another of the miraculous events.

## 26

### *On the Miraculous Sign of the Unfinished Log Which Was Cut out for Buddha Images but Abandoned<sup>1</sup>*

Dhyāna Master Kōtatsu 廣達,<sup>2</sup> whose secular name was Shimotsuke no asomi 下毛野朝臣,<sup>3</sup> was a man of Muza district, Kazusa province 上總國武射郡.<sup>4</sup> (Some say he was a man of Ahiru 畔蒜 district.)<sup>5</sup> In the reign of Emperor Shōmu, he went to the mountain called Kane no take, in Yoshino 吉野金峯,<sup>6</sup> and recited scriptures while walking around under the trees<sup>7</sup> in pursuit of the Buddha's path.

Now there was a horse-chestnut tree in the village of Tsuki in Yoshino district 吉野郡桃花里.<sup>8</sup> It was cut down to be made into Buddha images, but this was abandoned for many years. In this area there was a river named Akikawa 秋河.<sup>9</sup> It happened that the log was laid over the river so that men and animals could cross it.

Once Kōtatsu went to that village on an errand, and, upon crossing the bridge, heard a voice from under the bridge saying, "Ouch! Don't step on me!" Hearing this, he looked around in wonder, but he could not find anyone. As he did not dare to pass, he wandered around for a while close to the bridge, and, when he lifted it up, he found that it was an abandoned log cut for Buddha images. Struck with awe, he enshrined it in a purified place, paid homage to it in tears, and made a vow,<sup>10</sup> saying, "I will carve you into Buddha images since we have

6. The closing remarks imply that even making offerings as bribes is better than offering nothing, but this does not fit the story, for it was Kinume of Yamada who offered bribes, and Kinume of Utari who got four parents and two fortunes.

2. A monk of Gangō-ji, of the Hossō School. See the *Shoku Nihongi*, XXXII (Hōki 3:3:6). He was appointed as one of the ten dhyāna masters.

3. According to the *Shinsen shōjiroku*, the Shimotsuke family is descended from the imperial family.

4. Present Sanbu-gun, Chiba-ken 千葉縣山武郡.

5. Present Kimitsu-gun 君津郡.

6. See Chap. II(1)b; 1.28, n. 15.

7. 經行 *kyōgyō* or *kinhin*; after meditating in a sitting posture, ascetics walk around reciting scriptures.

8. Unlocated.

9. Present Shimoichi-gawa 下市川 which originates in Mt. Yoshino and flows into the Yoshino River.

10. 發誓願.

met by the work of interdependent causation.<sup>11</sup> He took the log to its appointed place, called upon the people to make offerings,<sup>12</sup> and directed the work of carving statues of Amida Buddha 阿彌陀佛,<sup>13</sup> Miroku Buddha 彌勒佛,<sup>14</sup> and Bodhisattva Kannon 觀音菩薩.<sup>15</sup> These are now enshrined in Oka-dō 岡堂,<sup>16</sup> in the village of Koshibe, Yoshino district 吉野郡越部村.<sup>17</sup>

Since a log does not have a mind, how can it cry? Doubtless this was nothing but the work of the Buddha's spirit.<sup>18</sup>

## 27

### *On a Woman of Great Strength<sup>1</sup>*

Owari no sukune Kukuri 尾張宿禰久玖利<sup>2</sup> was a governor of Nakashima district, Owari province 尾張國中嶋郡,<sup>3</sup> in the reign of Emperor Shōmu. His wife came from the village of Katawa in Aichi district 愛知郡片蔭里<sup>4</sup> of the same province (a granddaughter of the Venerable Dōjō of Gangō-ji).<sup>5</sup> She was faithful to her husband, and as gentle and delicate as glossed silk cloth. Once she wove fine hemp for her husband's robe. Its color and pattern were exquisite.

At that time the lord<sup>6</sup> who ruled that province was Wakasakurabe no Tau 稚櫻部任.<sup>7</sup> When the lord saw the beautiful robe on the district governor, he stripped him of it, saying, "It is too good for you to

11. 因緣 *in'en* or *innen*, the law of cause and effect.

12. He organized a *chishiki* or devotees' organization to carry out this project of making images. See Chap. I(1)d, nn. 110, 111.

13. See Chap. II(3)b, n. 132.

14. See Chap. II(3)b, n. 131. Doctrinally speaking, Maitreya is a bodhisattva, but there are many indications that he was considered a savior Buddha, much like Amida.

15. See Chap. I(1)a, n. 12.

16. Unlocated. See Fukuyama, *Narachō jin*, 316.

17. Present Koshibe, Ōyodo-chō, Yoshino-gun, Nara-ken 奈良縣吉野郡大淀町越部.

18. 聖靈 *shōryō*; see Chap. II(3)b.

1. One of the Venerable Dōjō cycle related to I.3, II.4. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari* (XXIII, 18).

2. See the *Nihon shoki*, XXIX (Tenmu 1:12:2); Aston, "Nihongi," II, 367. The title of *sukune* was given to the Owari family.

3. Present Nakashima-gun, Aichi-ken 愛知縣中嶋郡.

4. See I.3, n. 3.

5. Kyōkai's parenthesis. For the Venerable Dōjō, see *ibid*.

6. 國守 a chief provincial magistrate.

7. According to the *Shinsen shōjiroku*, Wakasakurabe is the name of a native family, but this provincial magistrate is unknown.